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ABSTRACT

The history of Slavic immigration in America is traced and the characteristics that define Slavs as an ethnic group are identified. Focusing on the difficulties experienced by Slavs in melting into accepted American patterns, the paper records the rise in Slavic ethnic consciousness. Topics discussed are Slavic language, geographic concentration of Slavs in Eastern Europe, cultural identity, physical characteristics, and religious differences. The section on early immigration discusses the reasons which attracted Slavs to America from earliest colonial days. These reasons include religious convictions, military obligations, adventure, and political idealism. Case studies of individual Slavic immigrants are presented. The greatest wave of Slavic immigration occurring from 1880-1920 is described, followed by discussion of the constant but less intense immigration after 1920. Reasons for later immigration include the Bolshevik Revolution, displacement due to political events in Europe, and religious persecution. The major contributions of Slavs to American science, music, industry, politics, and education are noted. (Author/DB)

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SLAVS IN AMERICA

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Adele K. Donchenko

The United States has long prided itself on being an amalgam of people of many races and many cultures. At the base of the American credo has been the assumption that America should somehow acculturate newcomers, "melt" them to flow into the mainstream of American culture as defined primarily by Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, North European patterns modified on North American soil. The concern was to make the foreigner "more like us" with the obvious inference that this was the most desirable state of affairs and anyone not assimilated into it was somehow less of an American.

This leveling process continued fairly smoothly until the last decades of the nineteenth century. Before that time the ethnic background of the majority of newcomers to the United States fit the norm, the vast sparsely-inhabited areas still alleviated population pressures in the more concentrated eastern section of the country, and industrialization had not yet geared to the furious tempo soon to be characteristic of much of the American scene. Until that time most of the immigrants landing on our shores came from the North- and West-European culture areas; however, from the 1880's on, the flow of newcomers burgeoned and, more significantly, this new tide included more and more of the peoples from southern and eastern Europe, those more distant not only in geographical location but in culture and appearance from the previously predominant strain. It was not long before the wave upon wave

of such "foreign" immigrants had shifted the proportions of annual total immigration so that the bulk came from these new areas--areas inhabited primarily by people of Slavic origin and Italians. Such groups would be more difficult to "melt" into the accepted pattern. It is little wonder that a growing concern on the part of the established "assimilated" Americans began to be expressed in the press, on the lecture platform, and in the halls of Congress. Some of the voices raised spoke of the positive contributions of these newcomers and of what they could give to the growing republic. But many more, and more influential, individuals came out in protest against what they saw as a growing cultural and economic threat to the established order of things. These voices prevailed and increasingly more restrictive measures were passed in an attempt to forcibly change the tide toward its former character. However, by then the "damage" had been done and the nation contained a considerable representation of the newer stock.

A flurry of writings on Slavs in the United States came forth in the first two decades of the present century. Many of these were polemic in nature, a reflection of the controversy heard in the country at the time. Even those which made an attempt at objectivity often were marked by fragmentary knowledge and understanding of the peoples involved. Since that time, a very few studies of individual Slavic groups have been made (e.g. Thomas and Znaniecki's

The Polish Peasant in Europe and America) but relatively little has come to the attention of the American public at large. The rise in ethnic consciousness in recent times reemphasizes the need to assess the role that Slavs have played in the building of our nation.

If the lack of available materials on the Slavs in the United States presents a problem to those interested in studying this group, certainly the diversity of the Slavic peoples, themselves, and their history contribute to the complexity of the situation.

Slavs are identified as a group specifically on the basis of language. Slavic languages are assigned to one language family, a branch of the Indo-European language stock. Secondly, the Slavic peoples are concentrated geographically in eastern Europe. The individual Slav's homeland may be a mountainous region, a low rolling plain, or a seacoast. For long periods in their history, especially in modern times, many of the Slavic peoples were under the political domination of a non-Slav minority. Even though they made up the bulk of the population in their homeland, their status was generally an unfavored one. The boundaries of their native states shifted frequently as the fotunes of the dominant power prospered or declined; it was not uncommon for a Slav to live under several such masters in a single lifetime. Of course, when a Slav emigrated his official entry into the new country required that he be identified. The logical basis

for identification was his citizenship from point of emigration. As a citizen of the Austro-Hungarian Empire he was often classed as an Austrian or Hungarian at the point of entry. Certainly the Slavic immigrant was aware of his cultural identity--he thought of himself as a Slovene, Croat, Slovak, Czech or Serb, and not as an Austrian or Hungarian. As a non-Russian Slav from Russian-administered territory, he was sure that he was a Pole or Ukrainian or Slovak; he had a long cultural history and a language different from that of the overlord to prove it. For those Slavic groups which had not had an independent state in the past or whose independence had existed for a very limited period of time, identification with his sub-group was no less strong than that of more powerful Slavic neighbors. Those who came from borderland areas, especially where the Russian Empire met the Austro-Hungarian realm, were tagged with a special problem. The multiplicity of terms for such groups was startling: were they Ruthenians, Rusinaks, Russians, Galicians, Malo-Russians, Ukrainians or Slovaks? One cannot completely fault the harried immigration clerk who processed the newcomers for a lack of consistency in classifying them.

Nor were these newcomers easily identifiable in terms of physical appearance or religious affiliation. Physically, they ranged from typically tall, swarthy South Slavs to blonde, blue-eyed Poles. Although the bulk of the Slavic immigrants were Roman Catholic, a significant number adhered

to Eastern Orthodoxy and there were clusters of Protestants and some Moslems. Some immigration data includes Jews as part of the Slavic immigration since large numbers came from Poland and Russia; other statistics identify them separately. But like a mosaic whose individual elements can be analyzed, only the composite of all these parts makes a whole picture.

Early Slavic Immigration

By far the bulk of the Slavs who came to the United States arrived between the 1880's and the 1920's attracted primarily by the economic opportunities available in the New World, but these were not the first to arrive on North American shores. Indeed, Slavic migration in lesser numbers began in the earliest years of our country's history.

These early Slavic immigrants were attracted to America for a diversity of reasons: some came because of religious convictions--either to escape religious oppression or to engage in missionary activity; others sought to escape military obligations at home; there were those recruited because of their technical skills, those who were moved by political idealism, and those who were motivated primarily by a search for excitement and adventure. For most, a combination of these motives had uprooted them from their native soil. All must have been moved by a spirit of enterprise to take off into the strange, unknown distance.

A full account of the participation and contributions of Slavs in American Colonial and pre-Colonial life is yet to be assembled.

There is speculation, well-reasoned in several instances, that Slavs from one area or another of eastern Europe had come to these shores during the earliest period of our nation's history. Colonial records show a sprinkling of obviously Slavic names. Some of these individuals rose to considerable prominence, others were destined to make their mark in less noteworthy ways. Some individuals contend that during the early period of European colonization of the North American continent the crews of ships that touched this area, including those of Christopher Columbus, must have contained seamen of Slavic origin. Most probably, these would be men from the thriving area of the Dalmatian Coast where the city of Ragusa (Split) was an established center renowned for its shipbuilding and the nautical prowess of its seafaring population. It is also reasonable to believe that ships from that area may well have sailed to parts of the new land. There are even those supporters who propose that shipwrecked Ragusan sailors had intermingled with Indians along the southeastern seabord, were involved in the second Roanoke settlement, the "Lost Colony", and that the word Croatan (the Indian tribe) is a corruption of Croatian.

Probably the first naturalized American was a Czech, Augustine Hermann, who reached New Amsterdam in 1633 and received "denization" in 1664. As a reward for his services in settling a boundary dispute between the Dutch colony and Maryland during which he mapped, for the first time, the territories of Maryland and Virginia with passable accuracy,

Hermann was given a 20,000 acre estate on Maryland's east shore peninsula. He is also credited with introducing tobacco culture into northern Virginia. One of his grandsons was a signer of the U.S. Constitution.

Another Czech settler of distinction was Frederick Philipse who established himself as a prosperous merchant in the Dutch colony. One of his descendants, Mary Philipse, is reported to have had a romance with George Washington, then a young army officer. During the War of Independence the Philipse family sided with the British Crown and their estate of some 156,000 acres in Westchester County was seized and sold at auction and the family was forced to flee to England. Today the Philipse mansion is a historical site of New York state.[1]

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Poland had many commercial and cultural ties with various of the other European powers of the time, including Holland, with Amsterdam an important haven for Polish religious and political dissenters. The Governor of New Amsterdam and the Polish government were in direct contact and Poles of various professions emigrated to the new Dutch colony; among the early settlers of nascent New York can be counted Poles who were active as military men, teachers and physicians. Poles did not confine themselves to the Dutch colony for they settled in the Delaware Valley as early as 1650, came into Pennsylvania and Virginia during the next hundred years; their names are found in the annals of backwoods exploration,

as fighters in the French and Indian Wars, and in the general history of the area.

The London Company which financed the Jamestown Colony in Virginia was anxious to recruit industrious and God-fearing settlers for its new endeavor but the original group of 104 settlers included only 12 laborers and skilled workmen, the remainder were listed as "gentlemen", whose main occupation in the New World appears to have been searching for gold. In the following year (1608), a ship bringing supplies and new emigrants to the colony included in its complement of passengers a group of Poles, who immediately set about making their new abode habitable. They founded the first glass factory, a tar distillery and soap establishments in the colony and the products from these enterprises were among the first cargo exports from Jamestown. Within a few years, fifty more Poles joined the initial group. Not being of English descent, they were not enfranchised by the first Virginia Assembly convened in July 1619. When they refused to work unless such rights were granted them, the Assembly capitulated and they were given the same voting privileges as the English settlers.[2]

Widely known contributions of Slavs to early American history are the exploits of various Poles who came to the Colonies' aid during the War for Independence. Even a fleeting history of that conflict cannot dismiss the names of Generals Thaddeus Kosciuszko and Casimir Pulaski from

the list of important officers in the Colonial Army. Although more distinguished than their fellow countrymen, they were not alone, for records show the names of other Poles who participated in the struggle for separation from the British Crown.

In the following period, Polish immigrants, although as yet not in great numbers, continued to arrive in the new nation, spurred into transferring from their homeland by political and military events there. In 1817, Congress granted 92,000 acres of land in Alabama to French and Polish exiles of the Napoleonic Wars "for the culture of vine and olive". Another group of Polish and French veterans, four hundred strong (including a few from Alabama) and armed, in 1818 set up the military colony of Champ-d'Asile west of Galveston in Texas.[3]

As a result of the defeat of the Polish uprising of 1830 by Russia, a significant influx of educated, talented, politically-sensative Poles came to the United States. Their numbers were not large, but they made their presence felt and contributed in many areas of the intellectual life of young America. Many ofthem taught in schools of all levels or were tutors in the homes of prominent American families and some even founded private schools. Trained military men of foreign descent were a component of consequence in the American army during the Mexican wars, for the Commander-in-Chief of the Mexican Army, on April 2, 1846, appealed to Germans, French, Poles and individuals of other nations"

to leave the American army and enlist under the Mexican banner.[4]

Confirmation of the valor of the Polish soldier is found in the pages of the history of the Civil War. Many of them rose to considerable rank in both the Union and Confederate armies.

Religious reasons were a not inconsiderable factor in attracting Slavs to America. The names of individual Slavs are found among those of early missionaries in various parts of the country. Although their main concern was propogation of their faith, they also made major contributions outside of the purely religious sphere. Their number includes a Croatian Jesuit, Baron Ivan Taraj, who died in New Mexico in 1640 and Ferdinand Konscak (changed to Gonzales) who came to Mexico in 1730, worked in California as a missionary and produced the first known geographical map of Lower California. In the 1790's a young Russian nobleman, Prince Dmitri Galitzin, who called himself Augustine Smith, came to Baltimore, converted to Roman Catholicism, was ordained the first Catholic priest in America and served as a missionary in Maryland and Pennsylvania.

First and foremost among Slovene missionaries who were especially active in the Upper Great Lakes region was Frederic Baraga. Baraga, of a well-to-do family, dedicated his life not only to religious endeavor in the New World but also to improving the lot of the Indians among whom he worked. Baraga, who came to the U.S. as a missionary to the Ojibway Indians early in the 1830's, did not share the prevalent

view that the native Americans were simply savages who could derive only good from contact with the white man's ways. He steadfastly railed against the evils of "civilization" which were corrupting the Indian and leaving with him only the bad habits of white trappers and settlers. Baraga attempted to introduce the Indians to apiculture and improved methods of agriculture. He conducted a vigorous campaign in his native land to raise funds for missionary work in America and actively recruited fellow countrymen to expand missionary activity in the new country. New missionaries not only came but remained to rise in the church hierarchy. Baraga's name lives on in place names in the area in which he worked (Baraga County, Minnesota; Baraga, Michigan). A significant monument to Frederic Baraga's contribution to the cultural history of our country is his Ojibway grammar, the first and still a significant description of that language.

A more considerable exodus of Slavs came to these shores to escape religious oppression. The Reformation of the seventeenth century had won converts in Slavic areas, especially among the Czechs, Slovaks, Slovenes and Croatians. With the implementation of anti-Reformation measures, these converts to Protestantism were forced to flee their homelands, moving first to areas of Europe more favorably inclined toward non-Roman Catholics and later, in large groups, to America. An especially fertile ground for conversion had been among Slovenes and Croatians.

Many of these people and those who were fleeing the aftermath of failed peasant revolts in their home areas moved first to Prussia. Then, in 1734, a group of their descendents emigrated to Georgia in a search for freedom of worship and economic well-being. They settled at a spot near the Savannah River which they named Ebenezer. However, the area was inaccessible and unhealthful so they soon moved to a better location which they named New Ebenezer, where they introduced cultivation of the silkworm which had been the family industry even before leaving the Slavic lands. By 1752 their number reached 1,500. Although New Ebenezer suffered serious setbacks during the Revolution, it continued to survive until the Civil War when the colony was destroyed by General Sherman's forces in 1864. Today, Croatian and Slovenian names on tombstones in the old cemetery are all that remains of the once thriving community.

A more lasting impact in our history was made by religious emigres who came originally from Czech lands. In the seventeenth century all non-Catholics were banned from western Czech (Bohemian) areas. Most of those Protestants who did not perish migrated. Among these religious refugees were adherents of the faith called the Moravian Brothers (Herrnhuters) who moved first to Germany, then, together with German converts to the Moravian Church, sailed to America to settle mainly in Georgia, North Carolina and Pennsylvania. In 1741, in the latter colony,

they founded the city of Bethlehem which became their chief center. Other exclusive Moravian villages were founded in Pennsylvania, as well as was the town of Salem, North Carolina, after the model of Moravian communities in Germany, England and Holland. The industrious Herrnhuters felt that education was important not only for the male adherents to their religion but for all. In 1749 they founded the second girls' boarding school in the United States and they were among the first groups interested in education for the Negro. Moravian missionaries ranged beyond the eastern states. From 1733 to 1772, one of their number, Matthew Stach, conducted missionary work among the Greenland Eskimos.

An absorbing chapter in the history of the Slavs on the North American continent begins in the reign of Peter the Great of Russia, in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Peter, always fascinated with the sea, commissioned Captain Vitus Bering, a Dane serving in the Russian Navy, to organize an exploratory mission to investigate the part of America lying off Siberia. Although Peter died before Bering's group got under way, his successor, Catherine I, continued support and in 1728 Bering's first voyage ended in success. A second expedition in the 1740's blazed the way for intrepid wanderers ranging from soldiers of fortune to Orthodox priests to go to the Aleutians and Alaska. In the following decades the Russians not only established military and trading posts, towns and agricultural colonies in that area but moved down the coast into northern California.

While California and the rest of the Pacific Coast were still very little known in the settled eastern part of the United States, established Russian colonies were operating on the west coast of the continent. The center, a spot named Fort Ross, was founded in 1812. The Russian colony existed until it was sold to Johann Augustus Sutter in 1841. The Alaskan territory was run by a semi-official Russian trading corporation until the territory was sold to the United States in 1867. During that period of time not only was trade fostered but churches and other Russian cultural institutions accompanied commercial and military cadres into the area.

Nineteenth century Slavic immigration preceding the "Great Wave" which began in the 1880's is marked by increasing economic contributions of the various groups involved. Dalmatian (Croatian) ships regularly sailed to these shores bringing goods and passengers. A favorite port of call was the city of New Orleans and not all of the sailors who arrived there left. Many settled down to engage in fishing and canning industries. Soon the oyster industry of that area came to be dominated by such Slavic settlers and their descendants. The adventurous Dalmatians also sailed to California where the climate and topography reminded them of their homeland. Here, they also established a flourishing fishing and canning industry and began to engage in shipbuilding. They formed cooperatives and expanded their endeavors up along the Pacific Coast to Puget

Sound and on northward to British Columbia and Alaska. Not only the seafaring element left its mark on the state of California and its economy, for a significant part of the success of the fruit-growing activity of that state received its start from Dalmatian growers who applied the knowledge and experience of their homeland to the new territory. The start of the apple industry of northern California is attributed to a Dalmatian immigrant named Mark Rubasa who went into business in the town of Watsonville; special Dalmatian plums, grapes, figs and apricots were introduced into the agricultural patterns of the area and developed further in the new environment.

An important service was provided to homesteaders and farmers by the itinerant peddler who traveled through the countryside with his important store of wares. In the Middle West, especially, a number of these merchants were Croats and Slovenes who had carried on their trade earlier at home. Several, through shrewd investment, especially in real estate in the Chicago area, were able to amass assets to establish them as individuals of significant economic importance.

While the United States was still expanding westward and land was cheap, groups of Slavs arrived whose main interest was in founding agricultural colonies under these favorable conditions. Slovene settlers established farms with the chief center in Brockway, Minnesota (1866). Many Czechs, fleeing the aftermath of the revolutions of 1848 in the Austrian Empire, poured into America in the following

two decades where they homesteaded the free land in the expanding West. (A stirring literary work devoted to such settlers is Willa Cather's novel My Antonia.) In the period 1850-1868, over 43,600 emigrants left Bohemia with the United States attracting many of them. The first Czech farming communities were established in Wisconsin with some of the early settlers there moving on to more western states.[5]

In the mid-nineteenth century it was not just a matter of chance that Slavic settlers clustered in one or the other section of the country, for there was a vigorous program of recruitment and campaign by representatives of these areas of the United States who advertised and even sent representatives and agents to the eastern parts of the country and to Central Europe to recruit and encourage migration to their locales. For example, a systematic pro-Texas campaign influenced not only Slavic groups but German pioneers as well to go to the south (1844, New Braunfels, Texas). It was in Texas that the first considerable Polish settlement was to be made in America. In 1854, a group of some 800 Polish immigrants, under the leadership of Father Leopold Moczygemba, a Franciscan monk, disembarked at the port of Galveston; with their household and farming goods they trekked inland to found a colony at a place they named Panna Maria, where the first Polish church in America was erected in 1854. From there the Poles spread out to various other locations in Texas until, in 1906,

the Polish population of Texas was estimated at between 16,000 and 17,000 persons.[6] In the late 1850's an agricultural settlement of Poles was established in Wisconsin and Poles soon spread to other sections, including urban settlements, in that state. It was in this period that their first settlement in Michigan, near Detroit, came into being. 1854 saw also the establishment of the first Czech Catholic church in St. Louis.

The question of ethnic identity and preservation of community was felt necessary so in December 1865-January 1866 a Slavic Congress met in Chicago to discuss ways and means for organizing ethnic settlements in outlying areas, including one proposal for en masse migration to Oregon. Although no definite action was taken as a result of this meeting, other efforts (mainly unsuccessful) reoccurred along these lines: at one time the Slovaks mounted a campaign to divert miners and millworkers, especially from eastern centers, to a Slovak enclave in Arkansas; in 1876 an organization pushed for encouragement of Slavic settlements in warmer climates, mainly Texas, Arizona and California.

Successful agricultural settlements by Slavs in the nineteenth century were those established by various religious groups, especially sects fleeing religious discrimination in Europe. Most of these came either from the Czechoslovak area or from Russia. An important proportion of such agricultural settlers in America were the Mennonites from Russia.

In the eighteenth century German Mennonites fled their homeland to the asylum offered in Russia. In 1763 Catherine II of Russia issued an edict providing such German colonists special privileges in Russia: freedom of belief, release from military obligations, local autonomy and remission of taxation for thirty years. Thousands of Mennonites came to settle, especially along the Volga and Don Rivers. However, in 1870, during the reign of Alexander II, release from the obligation to serve in the military was abrogated. Despite the pleas of Mennonite delegations, the Tsar and his successor stood fast by this decision. Other Protestant sects in Russia and those who had broken from the established Orthodox Church in the seventeenth century, whose beliefs forbade them from taking up arms, also were included as now eligible for military service. Groups of these dissenters left for other parts of the world and the agricultural possibilities and the relatively greater religious freedom in the growing United States attracted many of them. Unlike most of the earlier Slavic settlers and those who were to come during the industrial boom, they emigrated collectively and departures were more organized. The Mennonites and other Protestant groups who had co-religionists already in America contacted them for information on what they could expect in the new land. Others frequently sent out scouting parties from their memberwhip which then reported back to the group before the decision to leave was made. Considerable settlements were made in the western parts of Canada and the

United States: Kansas, the Dakotas, Nebraska, Minnesota.

"The Great Wave"

By the second half of the nineteenth century immigrants from various parts of the Slavic world were no longer a rarity and, as we have seen, were making solid contributions, perhaps unheralded at the time, to many aspects of life in the United States. However, their numbers were still rather insignificant in comparison to the swell that began in the 1880's and ebbed and flowed until approximately 1920.

According to official census figures, in 1850 there were 2,210,839 foreign-born in the United States and by 1860 this number had increased to well over four million, listed for some fourteen countries of birth and an "Other Countries" category. Of the fourteen, only China, Mexico and Italy, all with insignificant percentages of the total, are not northwest European areas. The "Other Countries" (which included Slavs) was a mere 1.7% of the total foreign-born population in 1850 and less than 1.5% of the total in 1860. Of the 789,000 immigrants who arrived in the United States in 1882, over 563,000 were from northern and western Europe and almost 85,000 from southern and eastern Europe. In 1886 arrivals dropped to 334,000+ and for the following seven years continued at approximately 500,000 annually. The significant change was not in the numbers but in the character of the tide.

In 1888, 72.6% of the immigrants came from northern

and western Europe and 25.8% from the southern and eastern parts. By 1892, 51.9% were from the north and west and 46.6% from the south and east. In 1896, for the first time, the southern and eastern immigrants exceeded those from northern and western European countries. By 1901, southern and eastern Europe accounted for 73.6% of the total immigration with the 23.7% minority from the northwest European area. From 1905 to 1914 the number of immigrants often exceeded one million and did not fall below 750,000 annually. In 1914, 1,218,480 newcomers arrived with 75.1% of their number coming from southern and eastern Europe and only 13.6% stemming from the northern and western areas. War in Europe, of course, shut off the flow of immigrants. However, in 1920 a new wave of immigration from Europe began; in that year a total of some 430,000 immigrants arrived on these shores. Of the European immigration for that year, 37.7% came from southern and eastern Europe and 20.7% from northern and western. The remainder of immigrants came mostly from other countries of North and South America. 1921 saw over 805,000 immigrants arrive in the United States with 64.7% from the south and east of Europe and 17.8% from the north and west.[7]

Such an influx of primarily Roman Catholic southern and east European immigrants raised alarm in the country, dominated as it was by Anglo-Saxon Protestant cast of the power system. Despite the continuing industrial expansion, the growing numbers of such foreign elements was viewed

with apprehension by many "native" Americans: free homesteads in the west were on the decline, cities were becoming more and more crowded, the "otherness" of the newcomers was a focus for the prejudiced. Complaints of unfair competition in work, and other real or imagined ills were attributed to the influx mainly of southern and eastern European immigrants and over the years legislators responded by passing increasingly restrictive immigration measures aimed especially at this element. A number of attempts to require a literacy test were defeated until 1917 when Congress passed a law excluding, with certain exceptions, aliens over sixteen years of age who were illiterate. More rigorous legislation came in the 1920's. A series of laws were enacted which established a quota system very definitely discriminatory in favor of immigrants from the northern and western European countries. A quota of approximately 150,000 immigrants from Europe was allotted, with about 126,000 allowed from the northern and western countries and approximately 24,000 from those in the south and east.

The new restrictions not only influenced the numbers but also the character of immigration from its formerly predominant Slavic and Italian composition. Literacy requirements which favored a higher educational level of the incoming foreigner showed an occupational profile of immigrants with less and less of the unskilled workers who had dominated the previous wave. Not only were newcomers affected, but those already in the country who might have originally intended only a temporary stay with the possibility of returning

to their European homes. The accoutrements of a permanent settling rose significantly: job skills were raised, established immigrants began to accumulate property and to go into business, more interest was shown in learning the English language, and the numbers taking out U.S. citizenship showed dramatic increase.[8]

The reasons for this massive influx of immigrants from south and eastern Europe lay in conditions on both sides of the Atlantic. The United States was undergoing a period of rapid industrial expansion which required increased manpower for the labor force. The nascent labor movement was beginning to pressure for better working conditions and higher wages. By tapping the supply of Europeans the owners had a source of strong, willing workers who, at least initially, were not likely to identify with the unions, would work long hours, often at a lower rate of pay than "native" Americans were willing to accept.

A number of factors in Europe were pushing the southeastern peasant out of his home into other parts of Europe and America as well as to the United States. It is true that some of the immigrants listed escape from political pressure or military obligation as the reason for their departure but the economic factor was pervasive. As the second half of the nineteenth century advanced, pressures on the European peasant population were mounting: the rising need for more government revenues meant increased taxation; while the increase of population in other areas

of Europe had stabilized, it was burgeoning in the Slavic lands, especially in rural areas; meagre landholdings were becoming more fractioned; the economies of other parts of Europe could not absorb such large numbers of the labor force, neither on a temporary nor on a permanent basis.

So the hard-pressed peasant moved his sights to far-off lands. Although the distance was greater, indications are that the individual who left his homeland had in mind a temporary move. The peasant was deeply attached to his home and the soil, and the idea of a temporary dislocation was in keeping with a common European pattern of migratory or seasonal work, still in practice today. Generally, the Slavic emigre did not liquidate any property and holdings he might have in the home country. Normally it was the male members of the society who left. But even more telling are the figures for emigration back to the homeland of the south and eastern immigrant. Emigration statistics were not kept before 1907, but data for the years following show a far greater proportion of "new" immigrants (those from south and east Europe) leaving the United States than that of "old" immigrants (from north and west Europe). In 1907, 77.3% of the "new" immigration and only 22.7% of the "old" immigration left Europe, while those who left the United States were 8.9% of the "old" and 91.1% of the "new" immigration. Although figures for succeeding years are not quite as

extreme, a pattern of high emigration rate from the United States by southern and eastern Europeans is evident. In the period from 1908 to 1930, north and west Europe contributed 37.2% of the immigrants to the U.S. and south and east Europe provided 43%. Of the total leaving the United States, 17.4% were of northern and western European origin while 64.9% of southern and eastern European background departed. A balance sheet shows a gain of 84.9% for northern and western Europeans and only 47.9% for those from eastern and southern Europe.[9]

The slowdown in immigration from the Slavic countries cannot be attributed to the restrictions placed on the number and educational qualifications of incoming foreigners alone. The post-World War I period which saw the dissolution of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire and the establishment of various independent Slavic nations (Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia) provided more favorable political conditions to encourage Slavs to remain in their homeland. The negative effect of the economic depression of the 1930's in the U.S. also acted as a strong deterrant to those who might have thought of making their fortune here. It was plain that migration of the proportions seen in the four decades spanning the turn of the century would not be matched.

What was the social pattern of immigration during the "Great Wave"? Although there were some families which came from their homeland as a unit, by far the bulk of the

immigrants during this period were men--some were single, others, though married, left their wives and children behind. This was mainly a peasant exodus. Since, in peasant society, traditionally the eldest son assumed the head-of-household status from his father and was obligated to take care of elderly parents until their death, very often it was one of the younger sons who first left for America. When one member of a family or of a certain village got settled in the new environment, he wrote for others of the family or of the village to follow him. Reports of life in the New World as related by a relative or fellow-villager carried credence.

Most of this new labor force faithfully recognized its obligation to help those who remained at home and a steady stream of remittances began to flow back into the homeland. Some who came to the new country fulfilled their intent of accumulating a nestegg and returning home; others who returned were not as fortunate for their health had been broken by the intensive work and poor living and working conditions in the "land of opportunity". There were immigrants who originally had come for a temporary stay but decided to remain. They sent for their families or for a bride from the home region, or married someone they met in America, preferably a woman of their own nationality.

Although farming had been his main occupation at home, the Slavic newcomer usually did not pursue this work in America. It was a rare immigrant, indeed, who arrived here

with enough capital to buy even the cheapest land available. In addition, hiring out to a farmer at low wages was not the way to accumulate one's "fortune" for a quick return home. A very important factor influencing the place of settlement was, of course, the availability of employment, but a not insignificant attraction was the presence of one's own kind. Away from his family, the village and a way of life he knew and understood, set down in a foreign sea where he could not communicate, the newcomer sought out his fellow-countrymen. He relied on the experience of those who had come before him to help in finding employment and a place to live, to provide a familiar small island of his culture in the alien world around him. So the Slav was drawn mainly to the mining and industrial centers--Pennsylvania, West Virginia and on into Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Upper Michigan, Minnesota, Colorado. If he was not to find work in the mines, then there were the iron and steel plants and other heavy industry in Pittsburgh, Bethlehem, Wheeling, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, where his capacity for long hours of back-breaking labor, often under hazardous working conditions at the minimal pay possible, recommended him to the owners and the bosses.

Thus the tide of newcomers from southern and eastern Europe flooded into the industrial areas and urban centers. By 1910 there were three-and-a-half million foreign-born in the United States, one-seventh of the total population.

More than 72% of all the foreign-born were urban, twice the figure for the American-born of native parentage, and 29% lived in cities with more than half a million people, nearly five times the native figure. In that year, almost one-quarter of all New York's foreign-born had arrived within the previous five years, and in Manhattan one-quarter of those over ten years of age could speak no English. In the labor force of 1910, especially high proportions of foreign-born were found in the following occupations: domestic and personal service (one-quarter), steam and street railways (rather more than one-quarter), cotton mills (over one-third), woolen mills (nearly one-half), coal mining (nearly one-half), blast furnaces and rolling mills, meat packing, tanneries and brewries (each at least one-half), iron and copper mining, and some garment trades (each about two-thirds). Occupational data show concentrations by Slavic ethnic groups in the following areas: 32% of the Czech foreign-born and about 10% of the Poles were employed in agriculture (no significant figures for other Slavs are given) while the percentages of foreign-born north and west European peoples are much higher (Norwegians 50%, Swedes 30%, Germans 27%, English 18%, Irish nearly 14%): in mining 8% of Poles, 19% of those born in Austria, and 30% of those born in Hungary founds employment, while the proportions of north and west Europeans was exceedingly small with the exception of the British (10%)--and of the latter, 80% had been employed in mines at home while a

minimal percentage of the Slavs had that background; employed as laborers were 8% of the Russian-born, 14% of the Czechs, 19% of those from Austria, 22% from Hungary, and 29% of the Poles--with the exception of the Irish (22%), most north and west European nations provided less than 10%.[10]

What met these newcomers once they arrived in America? Most of them had very little in their pockets, at best they knew one or two words of English and had only a vague idea of the country. They may have been recruited through the accounts of those who had gone before, or they may have been contacted by transportation agents who were well spread through the Slavic areas of Europe. After an arduous journey in steerage conditions they reached their new land. Here they were processed at a port of entry, probably Ellis Island in New York harbor. Once past the health examination and questioning by immigration officials, one was left to find his way alone. It could have been that in the entry processing the name left on his documents differed from that he knew as his own. Being illiterate or barely literate, his multi-syllabic name, full of strange consonant combinations for the immigration clerk, came out in a spelling more pronounceable for English speakers. Or, if it came through the first encounter unscathed, it was often simplified by the American foreman or payroll clerk on his first job.

A greater problem of identity, as far as official records are concerned, was set by the fact that the bulk of the Slavs who arrived had come from some part of the Austro-Hungarian

Empire or from other areas with shifting borders. As a minority group in an area ruled by non-Slavs, how was he to be classified as to nationality? As a citizen of the Ustro-Hungarian Empire was he an Austrian or a Hungarian, or a Slovak, Slovene, Croat, Czech or Serb? If he was a Pole from Russian-dominated territory, should the immigrant be classed as a Pole or Russian? Were Jews to be classified as to their Polish or Russian citizenship or as to their religious-ethnic group? Even a trained geographer was hard put to differentiate between Slavs, Slovaks, Slovenes, Slavonians, much less could one expect workers, foremen, shopkeepers and ordinary citizens with limited education who had little knowledge or interest in that area of the world to keep such terms straight. As a result, there was confusion not only in informal situations but even government immigration statistics of the period suffer.

The ethnic group coming from the area located in the southwestern part of European Russia has been especially difficult to identify in official statistics. In the late 1870's large groups of peasants whom we would now classify as Ukrainians began to arrive in the United States. These impoverished peasants came from the slopes of the Carpathian Mountains, mainly from regions of the Austrian province of Galicia and of northern Hungary where they had been an important source of cheap labor for the estates of Polish and Hungarian nobles. The United States' Censuses of 1910 and

1920 list such people as "Ruthenians", in 1930 they were called "Ukrainians" and "Ruthenians", and in 1940 as "Ukrainians". The Bureau of Immigration registered then as "Ruthenians (Russniaks)" and later as "Ukrainians". Some writers follow the old czarist terminology and call them "Malo-Russians" or "Little Russians". Certain subdivisions of the group insist on being called "Carpatho-Russians", "Rusins", or "Russians".

After passing through the governmental formalities, if the immigrant was lucky, he got to his original destination. It was not an unusual occurrance for him to be bilked of his few possessions even before he had been on the American soil for twenty-four hours, too often by one of his own countrymen, an earlier arrival, who considered the newcomer "greenhorn" fair pickings.

When the new arrival reached his destination, it was imperative that he find a cheap place to live, if possible among fellow-countrymen. The low wages he received for his labor, the obligation he felt to help support those left behind or to accumulate every possible penny for his eventual return home forced him into substandard housing. Even should he desire more adequate quarters he often found that the price he was expected to pay was much higher than that asked from "native" Americans. Since the bulk of the immigrants were males between the ages of sixteen and forty four, a common pattern was for several to band together to live communally. Often, too, a Slav whose wife had accom-

panied him would set up a boarding house which not only took care of the material needs of the boarders but the head of such a household, an individual who had been in the country for a longer time and was more conversant with American ways and regulations, would act as general counselor and adviser to his tenants in personal and financial matters as well.

Whatever their original intentions may have been, significant numbers of immigrants remained in America. As arduous and exhausting as the work was, the immigrant required some substitute for the close extended family ties and the familiar customs and festivities of his native village life. Informal foci of social life, especially in the early years of the "Great Wave", were the local enterprises run by fellow-countrymen--usually the saloon and small grocery store. The ethnic bar was the place where the single male spent his free time among his own kind. The saloonkeeper often acted as banker, adviser, and general counsel.

The church also played an important role in the immigrant's life. In the United States ethnic church communities were founded to serve specific groups. The church in Europe was primarily a religious center, but in the new world its function was expanded to include social and more general cultural responsibilities covered by other institutions at home. For most immigrants, the church was the prime agency in carrying on the native

culture and transmitting it to the new generation of American-born offspring who began to augment the immigrants' ranks. Church schools were organized where not only religion but also the history and language of the homeland were taught either as a supplementary "Sunday School" endeavor or as formal primary educational institutions within the jurisdiction of the religious parish. Later, a number of secondary schools and even institutions of higher learning with specific ethnic orientation were founded. Wherever possible, these were staffed by nuns or clergy of the required Slavic background.

Auxiliary organizations and other societies also came into being. Among the first of these were the "benefit" or fraternal societies, insurance organizations to provide for time of need--sickness and death. These, in turn, began to extend their scope of activities beyond the strictly financial, to organize social events, athletic activities and competitions, singing societies, dramatic groups and other cultural endeavors. Both church-affiliated and non-church-affiliated or independent organizations of this kind were formed. As the units prospered, clubhouses or national "homes" were built to house the various activities and to provide a meeting place and social center for the specific ethnic immigrant community. The ethnic press, often sponsored by a fraternal organization basically for its members, became an important vehicle of communication

among those spread throughout the country. Some newspapers and journals were organs of the fraternal organizations, others were independent of such sponsorship. The political orientation spanned from the extremes of the right to those of the left. Many newspapers and magazines had a very ephemeral lifespan, others managed to survive for much longer periods of time.

The immigrant press gave news of what was happening in the homeland (much of which never found its way into the American press, even had the immigrant had sufficient knowledge of the language to read English materials), offered advice and guidance on how to adapt to the new land, and acted as communication channels for establishing or restoring contact with fellow-countrymen in America.

"Ethnic" businesses began to arise to serve the community. It was not too long before certain sections of large cities acquired the cultural flavor of specific ethnic groups--the shopkeepers and helpers were immigrants, the wares served national tastes, the little English heard was heavily accented.

These Slavic (and other nationality) enclaves grew for decades and many endure to this day. However, with the birth of a new American-born generation the invisible walls surrounding these communities within communities began to give way. The problem of the second-generation has received considerable airing both in scholarly treatises and in the popular press; the rejection of the "old country"

culture by many children born to immigrants, the struggle of self-identification of the young with a foot in each of the cultures, the bewilderment and alienation of the parents who could not understand their own offspring. As the new generation received an education, usually much beyond that of their parents, and began to prosper in America, many moved out of the confines of the ghetto. Even those who did not completely reject their heritage found it diluted in the English-speaking atmosphere where they now lived and worked. However, the third and now even the fourth generation are again seeking their roots in the ethnic past. The nuclei of such Slavic communities remain in large cities today, although diminished by the death of most of the older generation, the exodus of the American-born generations, and subject to encroachment by newer urban ethnic concentrations since the ethnic "ghettos" are usually located in areas of a modest economic level.

Once the Slavic immigrant accepted the fact of a long or permanent stay in the United States, one of his first goals was to acquire property, whether it was a single-family dwelling or a multi-family structure which could provide additional income by renting room which the family did not need or was willing to forego. Unpretentious as most of these houses might be, wherever possible there should be some land around it for a small garden. The immigrant took great pride in his property and tended it

assiduously. Even if found in deteriorating areas of the city, these buildings stood out by their neatness and good repair.

Post-"Wave" Slavic Immigration

Although by the 1920's the "Great Wave" had subsided considerably, there were still several "ripples" marking periods of rather intensive Slavic immigration in the following years.

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 in Russia sent streams of emigres from that country into western Europe and into the Orient from which some moved on to other continents. There were concentrations of such Russian exiles in capital cities in Europe, especially in Paris and Prague, and in the Orient in Shanghai and other Chinese cities. Numbers of such political emigres came to the United States. This was a different breed from the Slav of the "Great Wave". Highly cultured, educated individuals, many from the aristocracy, they led a life abroad that was worlds apart from that of the ex-peasants who had arrived before them to toil in mine and factory. In their centers in New York and San Francisco, the "aristocratic" Russians raised the level of emigre intellectual life by establishing theaters, presses, and other cultural institutions. Many of these emigres literally lived out of suitcases, so convinced were they that Soviet rule would be ephemeral and they would soon be returning to Russia. Some, unable to live away from their native soil, did return. Just as with the second and third

of other Slavic groups, the offspring of those who stayed soon began to merge into the mainstream of American life.

The declining numbers of foreign-born Slavs in America received their most significant augmentation as a result of the population dislocations of World War II. At the end of that conflict some eight million displaced persons (DP's) could be found in Austria, Italy and Germany, the bulk of them came from Slavic countries. Many of these had been taken as prisoners-of-war or as forced labor from their homelands to the Third Reich. Others had left their home of their own accord. In the first years following the end of the war most of them were repatriated to their homeland. Some went willingly, others, under duress. The Western occupying powers, true to their agreement with the Soviet Union, facilitated this exodus.

Many of the DP's did not wish to go home or were fearful of returning to a land dominated by a political regime which they could not accept. Only after wholesale escapes from the homeward-bound echelons and appalling numbers of suicides by those who preferred this fate to the one they expected awaited them upon their return was this practice discontinued. In order to circumvent repatriation, many of the DP's, especially those from territories under the Soviet Union, manufactured new biographies instantly. Some endeavored to pass as natives of another country. Others, admitting the Soviet Union as their birthplace, claimed extended residence in other countries.

Certainly this practice must have some reflection in the statistics on Slavic immigration to the United States in the post-war period.

By 1949, some 600,000 of the one million DP's left in camps at the end of 1945 had been resettled in various parts of the world. Since the restrictive quota immigration laws of the 1920's were still in effect in the U.S., these aliens were admitted as quota immigrants for permanent residence, first by a Presidential directive (in 1945) until legislation authorizing admission of displaced persons was approved in June 1948. By this time, some 41,379 had been admitted in the preceding two-and-a-half-year period. Of this total, approximately sixteen thousand listed Germany as their country of birth, twelve thousand claimed Poland, three thousand from Czechoslovakia, two thousand from Austria, one thousand from Hungary, and well under one thousand each from various other east European countries. Only slightly over two thousand gave the Soviet Union as their place of birth.

Between the enactment of the Displaced Persons Act of 1948 and the fiscal year 1954, almost 405,000 more DP's were admitted. One of the features of the Displaced Persons Act was a provision to allow future mortgaging of the national quotas set by earlier immigration legislation. As a result, a number of the smaller East European countries had their quotas mortgaged well into the twenty-first century

while north and west European quotas were left less than half-filled. Reason prevailed and in 1957 these mortgages were cancelled.

Just as their predecessors in the "Great Wave", these new Slavic immigrants preferred to settle in urban areas. Of the total U.S.population in 1950, those of foreign white stock (foreign-born and native-born whites of foreign parentage) accounted for one-fourth of the total white population. However, by 1950 the concentration of such people in urban areas was even greater than it had been in urban areas with 83.7% of foreign-born whites and 62.7% of the native-born white population listed as urban residents.[11]

The DP's also tended to move into the settled ethnic neighborhoods. Although the educational level of these newcomers was considerably higher than that of the Slavs who came at the turn of the century, because they lacked the language many had to go to work in the factories and mills or in other unskilled work of the type in which the earlier immigrants had found employment. However, it was much easier for the new wave to make better use of their superior skills once they acquired at least the rudiments of English. Despite some frictions between the new and old groups, generally they belonged to the same ethnic community. Unlike their predecessors, more of the DP's came as family groups and relatively few new cultural and social institutions to meet their needs were necessary.

Another slight swell in Slavic immigration came as the result of the Czech uprising against Soviet domination in 1968. Mainly young intellectuals, supporters of the Dubček reforms, left their home for fear of resprisal which threatened them after the show of Soviet military strength. Although the young Czech emigres who came to America could not avoid the period of adjustment inevitable to a foreigner in any country, their advantages of youth and education greatly facilitated their move into educational and professional circles at a level more compatible with their expectations and aspirations.

The most recent influx of Slavic immigrants in readily identifiable characteristics is that of the last years from the Soviet Union. Mainly Jewish former residents of that country, these newest Slavs (in culture, at least) share much of the same educational and social characteristics of the Czech political emigres. Many of them are younger professional people or others with educational accomplishments beyond the secondary school. Again, they come mainly from urban areas and transition to another city perforce is less traumatic than that from countryside to city which marked most of the "Great Wave" and many of the DP Slavic immigrants. In addition, through the organizational and financial support of American Jewish groups, the adjustment to the new environment for these latest immigrants is significantly eased in comparison to what faced the previous Slavic immigration. No less important than the material support which the

American Jewish groups provide is the psychological effect of the backing of such a well-organized community and of the relatives, immigrants of the earlier generation, many of the newcomers have in the United States.

Slavic immigrants, in limited numbers, are still coming to the United States. However, the restrictions on emigration by Eastern bloc countries is undoubtedly a substantial factor in the decline in their numbers. The only Slavic country-of-origin which has not shown a drop in the foreign-stock population in the decade 1960-1970 is Yugoslavia, the east European country with perhaps the least restraint on emigration. In 1970 the U.S. Census lists over 2,374,000 persons of Polish foreign stock, 1,943,000 from the U.S.S.R., 759,000 from Czechoslovakia and 447,000 from Yugoslavia.

The fact that the Slavs emigrated to this country in force at a relatively late period and came primarily from lower economic and educational levels of society would lead one to expect that few outstanding figures in the nation's intellectual or political life would come from their ranks. It can be said that those of the first generation who rose to national and international acclaim were atypical of the mass of immigrants for most of them had had considerably more education in their home country. The fields of science and music are areas in which Slavs of the first generation were especially noteworthy:

Sikorsky (aeronautical engineering), Pupin (physics), Tesla (electrical engineering, Stravinsky, Rodzinski, Stokowski (music), Adamic (literature), Malinowski (anthropology), and others. First-generation Slavs who came to this country at a relatively early age, and the second and succeeding generations rose to the forefront in many other areas as well. Some achieved widespread acclaim, others are better known to specialists in their fields. Their ranks are augmented by countless others whose contributions, sometimes identified, at other times lost in the anonymity of complex industrial, political, educational and social structures. Not only the accomplishments of prominant Americans of Slavic background but the little-advertised strength which the threads of Slavic citizens have woven into the fabric of our life should finally lay to rest the fears expressed by the early twentieth-century alarmists who saw the influx of east and south Europeans as an omen of the inevitable decline of our country.

Notes

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3. Ibid., p. 116.
4. Ibid., p. 144.
5. Thomas Čapek, *The Čechs (Bohemians) in America* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1920), p. 31.
6. Wytrwal, p. 146.
7. Gerald Govorchin, *Americans from Yugoslavia* (Gainesville, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 1961), pp. 47-49.
8. Ibid., pp. 52-53.
9. Ibid., pp. 58-59.
10. Philip Taylor, *The Distant Magnet* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 192-197.
11. Marion T. Bennett, *American Immigration Policies* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1963), p. 94.